

Teaching Young Children to Love¹

Evelyn Rooks-Weir and Millie Ferrer²

Everyone needs LOVE.

Babies and toddlers need lots of LOVE. A child whose needs are met; whose discomforts are promptly removed; and who is cuddled, caressed, played with, and talked to develops a sense of the world as a safe place to be and of people as loving and trustworthy.

Mothers and fathers can show that they LOVE their baby by holding and cuddling him or her when they feed the baby.

Mothers and fathers can speak and sing softly to the baby when they change his or her diaper.

Mothers and fathers can play games with the baby. Some games to play with the baby are peek-a-boo and pat-a-cake.

Mothers and fathers model behavior for their children. Teach them by example. Your children imitate what they see at home, so your role is very important.

LOVE makes a baby feel happy.

LOVE helps the baby grow and learn as he or she should.

LOVE does not always keep a baby from crying. Babies cry to let their parents know that their diapers need to be changed, or that they are hungry or sick. Crying babies need to be LOVED, too.

Remember, a baby needs LOVE every day.

-
1. This document is FCS2001, one of a series of the Family Youth and Community Sciences Department, Florida Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida. Original publication date October 1, 1988. Revised April 1, 2000. Reviewed March 27, 2006. Please visit the EDIS Web site at <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu>.
 2. Written by Evelyn Rooks-Weir, former associate professor, Human Development, and revised by Millie Ferrer, Ph.D., associate dean, Florida Cooperative Extension Service, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL 32611. Reviewed March 2006 by Eboni Baugh, Ph.D., assistant professor, Family, Youth and Community Sciences, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL 32611.

The Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (IFAS) is an Equal Opportunity Institution authorized to provide research, educational information and other services only to individuals and institutions that function with non-discrimination with respect to race, creed, color, religion, age, disability, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, national origin, political opinions or affiliations. U.S. Department of Agriculture, Cooperative Extension Service, University of Florida, IFAS, Florida A. & M. University Cooperative Extension Program, and Boards of County Commissioners Cooperating. Larry Arrington, Dean